

PLANNING APPLICATION – REPLACEMENT FOOTPATH AT ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, BISHOPSTONE

Ref SJB(P)5

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

This planning application seeks permission for the replacement of the existing gravel path from the Lych Gate to the church of St John the Baptist, Bishopstone with one made from resin bound gravel.

St John the Baptist, Bishopstone is a largely 14th century church listed as Grade 1 in Historic England's national list of buildings of Architectural of Historic Interest. The Parochial Church Council recently received a grant of £248,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This very significant investment has funded a major reconstruction project to save the church's failing North Transept roof and secure the future of one of Wiltshire's most significant heritage assets. This work forms part of a wider programme of projects that will help deliver the NLHF's "investment principles" by widening the building's role, increasing community access and ensuring its sustainability in the longer term.

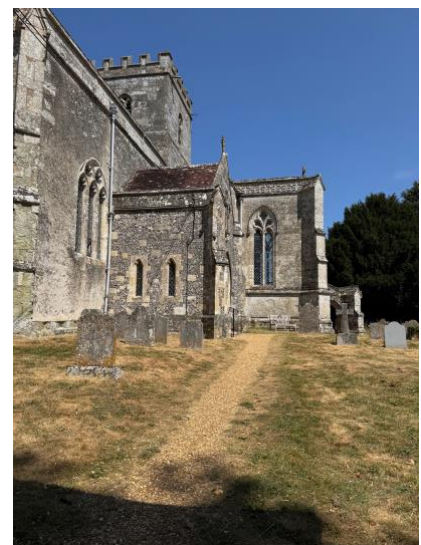


St John the Baptist Church, Bishopstone. The footpath can be seen in this picture and the one below.

The Proposed Works

The proposal to re-surface the main path to the church will improve access to the building and help make it a more inclusive space for the community. Wiltshire Council has just approved application PL/2026/02830 for the improvement of toilet facilities at the church.

At present the church has an old established gravel pathway leading from the Lych Gate to the Porch and main door of the church and round to a subsidiary access – the Priest's Door into the Chancel. The layout of the existing path is set out in drawing SJB(P)3 and photographs are below. This path is simply a layer of gravel over compacted earth. The path is uneven, with protruding stones from the earth below forming trip hazards. It has become rather narrow, as the grass has grown over the sides.



The path causes particular problems for people with mobility issues, making it very hard to push a wheel chair or walking frame through the gravel to the porch door. The path needs to be restored back to its original width, so that it is wide enough for a wheel chair to pass through. The Parochial Church Council considers that a new path is required which enables people with mobility problems to access the church safely and as easily as possible and which will reduce maintenance liabilities.

Following extensive studies of alternative surfacing options it is proposed to replace the existing path with a resin bound gravel surface. The layout of the replacement path is set out in drawing SJB(P)4. The path will follow the existing route, running approximately 50 metres from the Lych Gate to the south entrance, past the Almonry and on to the Priest's Door. The layout will be slightly amended as it approaches the Priest's Door to avoid a drain sump cover. It is not proposed to extend the replacement path along the line of the existing path where it continues round the east end of the church.

A resin bound gravel path forms a firm surface suitable for wheelchair access. It is permeable (SUDS compliant) and dust free. It is easily cleaned if required. Whilst the colour of the existing path does vary from section to section, it is proposed that the replacement path should, as closely as possible, match the existing footpath. Photographs are attached of samples from contractors who are to be invited to tender for this project. All of these reflect the colour of the existing path.

Sarah Seal

Church Warden.

Existing Path





The new path will follow the existing path to the Priest's Door. It will not continue round the east end of the church – see photograph.

Replacement Path Samples

